



NEWS

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Office of the Secretary

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Secretary Norton Approves \$274 Million in Southern Nevada Projects plus \$111 million for acquisition of sensitive lands

(WASHINGTON) – Interior Secretary Gale Norton today announced approval for spending nearly \$385 million in funds raised by the sale of public land in the Las Vegas Valley under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act.

“The funds are generated from land sales and are used to protect environmentally sensitive areas and to improve parks and recreational opportunities,” Norton said. “These are federal lands that have been designated for disposal into private ownership to provide for community expansion and economic development in other areas of Nevada.”

Under the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act passed in 1998, BLM is authorized to sell land identified for disposal in the Las Vegas Valley, and to use the proceeds to acquire land and pay for projects that benefit the people of Nevada.

The approval provides \$104 million for the development of 28 park, trail and natural area development projects in partnership with local governments in Clark County. It also provides funds for capital improvements at recreation areas, and the acquisition of environmentally sensitive land in Nevada.

The projects selected to receive funding were developed in partnership with state and local government, as well as considerable public involvement. Almost 74 percent of the expenditures are for projects in Clark County.

While \$111 million is approved to acquire sensitive land, the Secretary has directed the BLM in Nevada to continue an emphasis on disposal of appropriate public lands consistent with land use plans.

“I applaud the Nevada Congressional Delegation for their unwavering support as we work together to implement the provisions of the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act,” Norton said. “Our work together enables growth to be planned and coordinated for the fast-growing Las Vegas Valley.”

The funds announced today are the fourth round of expenditures authorized under the Act. Each year, the BLM conducts a nomination and approval process for

potential project and land acquisitions. The announcement of the round four approval begins the nomination period for round five.

In addition to providing funds for conservation and environmental education projects, the Act also benefits the state school trust fund and the regional water authority with a percentage of the proceeds from the land sales.

The Secretary's recommendations include:

- \$104 million for the development of 28 park, trail and natural area development projects in partnership with local governments in Clark County.
- \$36 million for conservation initiatives, including environmental education projects.
- \$16 million for continued development of the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.
- \$118 million for 39 capital improvement projects at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, the Desert National Wildlife Refuge and in the Spring Mountain National Recreation Area.
- \$111 million for 53 acquisitions of environmentally sensitive lands in Nevada to be managed by the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Fish and Wildlife Service to provide recreation opportunities, protect endangered species habitat and protect important cultural values.

A complete list of projects, land acquisitions and procedures for nominations under round five can be found on the BLM Nevada Internet web site by clicking on "Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act" at www.nv.blm.gov.

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